



2014 Honorees

SC-SIC Dick and Tunky Riley Award for SIC Excellence

2014 Winner – Okatie Elementary SIC, Okatie – Beaufort County School District

This SIC took steps to enhance communication with parents on school district issues and decisions, specifically those related to rezoning issues in this growing area. SIC members and school administrators participated in the school board's Bluffton Community Committee, working with other SICs and community members to discuss new school needs, rezoning, and community involvement in the process. This SIC also established Ladies and Gentlemen's Club Mentoring Programs for identified students, partnering with school staff and community leaders to empower boys and girls by growing self-esteem and confidence. The SIC also collaborated with the school's PTO, a local church and the Lowcountry Food Bank on the HOOT Bag program, a food donation effort serving 20 identified school families with a box providing a week's worth of food each month. Additionally, the SIC worked to improve procedures and safety of student car rider drop-off and pick-up, to include traffic direction, improved signage and a no cell phone use policy.

Buena Vista Elementary SIC, Greer – Greenville County Schools

This SIC undertook efforts to assist academically struggling students through three initiatives scheduled during and after school. The Early Risers Club for at-risk students in grades 3-5 uses computer based programming to help increase student proficiency through remediation in Math, English Language Arts and Reading. The Brainbuilders program is a volunteer-based in-school tutoring program working with identified students in grades 1-5. After School Enrichment Programs based on the STEAM curriculum (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math), and programs promoting healthy living through Movement, provide 29 grade-level activities directly tied to classroom learning. Through these combined SIC initiatives, the school has seen tangible increases in students scoring "exemplary" or "met" on end-of-year assessment tests in ELA, Math and Social Studies (all over 90 percent), with over 86 percent scoring "exemplary" or "met" in Science, and over 91 percent in Writing – garnering a Palmetto Gold rating for the school in both performance and closing the achievement gap.

Irmo High SIC, Irmo – School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties

To increase community awareness of the successes and true story of their school, this SIC established a Positive Promotions Committee. Members of this committee attended local school board meetings to call attention to student and staff accomplishments, and comment on issues pertaining to the school; submitted letters and articles to local media outlets and for inclusion on the district's website; countered rumors and misinformation with accurate data and materials correcting misperceptions; and developed a full-color brochure highlighting the school's history, programs, accomplishments, and future direction, partnering with the school's PTO to publish the piece. The SIC also provided input on the selection of new principal, soliciting feedback from SIC members, parents and teachers, and providing this information to district administrators for consideration in the hiring process. Additionally, the SIC helped mediate a school discussion regarding the naming of facilities, which led to adoption of a specific school board policy pertaining to such requests.

2014 Riley Award Finalists, continued

Port Royal Elementary SIC, Port Royal – Beaufort County School District

This SIC partnered with a local church to provide scholarships for a number of needy students to receive afterschool care at the nearby YMCA. This partnership also led to the establishment of a school uniform voucher program sponsored by the church, as well as the provision of school supplies for the entire student body for the year. As the school celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2011, the SIC worked with the Town Council and the Historic Port Royal Foundation on the challenging process of getting the school listed on the National Register of Historic Places, with a decision on the designation by the National Park Service expected this spring. The SIC also believed that the historic and cultural nature of the Town of Port Royal had considerable educational value. Walking field trips called “In Our Own Backyard,” were initiated by the SIC, utilizing a map of designated sites specifically developed for them by the town.

Ridge View High SIC, Columbia – Richland School District Two

This SIC undertook efforts to improve communication and celebrate school and student successes. It instituted mass email distribution to inform parents of SIC meetings and activities, and to solicit feedback to promote the school’s interests and address parent concerns. Through a new Public Relations Campaign, the SIC partnered with the PTSO and school administration to create the Blazer Press Corps providing consistent branding, improved electronic and written communications, and to publicize events and achievements within the school and beyond. This led to an enhanced school website and newsletter, and a blog containing real-time information. The SIC launched a campus beautification initiative fully documenting many areas needing upgrade, repair and attention, resulting in an architectural plan drafted by the district to address these issues. Also, the SIC worked with school and district administrators to improve traffic and pedestrian safety, leading to roadway and directional signage improvements, flashing school zone lights, and a fully-marked school crosswalk.

The annual Dick and Tunky Riley Award for School Improvement Council Excellence was created in 2002 to recognize the significant contributions made to public education by the nearly 15,000 School Improvement Council (SIC) members who volunteer on the more than 1,100 SICs across South Carolina. The Riley Award is named in honor of former SC Governor and US Education Secretary Richard Riley and his late wife, Tunky, and recognizes the couple’s longstanding commitment to quality public education.

A core partner in the Center for Educational Partnerships at the University of South Carolina College of Education, the SC School Improvement Council (SC-SIC) was established in state law over 35 years ago to provide the member training, technical assistance, statutory accountability, and operational resources vital to the continued success of the community-based School Improvement Councils serving each of South Carolina’s K-12 public schools.

South Carolina School Improvement Council

“Civic Engagement in Public Education”

USC College of Education, Suite 001, Columbia, SC 29208

803-777-7658 800-868-2232 <http://sic.sc.gov>